

# El Camino del Cerro Environmental News



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Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

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## Background

The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) is investigating the El Camino del Cerro Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund (WQARF) Site for possible soil and groundwater contamination. ADEQ's WQARF Program, which is also known as state Superfund, investigates and cleans up contaminated soil and groundwater sites throughout the state.

Once the sources, type and extent of contamination at a given site are determined, ADEQ can develop strategies to clean up the contaminated areas. If contamination is found to pose an immediate risk to public health or if it is a likely source of groundwater contamination, an early response action (ERA) can be conducted before the full investigation of the WQARF site has been completed.

## Where is the site located?

The El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site is located in the northwest section of the Tucson city limits and Pima County, and is bound by the Rillito River on the north, Shannon Road on the east, El Camino del Cerro Road on the south and the Santa Cruz River on the west (*see attached map*). The site consists of a former landfill to the southwest of Interstate 10 (I-10) and industrial and residential properties to the northeast of I-10.

## What contaminants have been found at the site?

Nine contaminants have been identified above regulatory levels in the groundwater below the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site. These contaminants include tetrachloroethene (PCE), trichloroethene (TCE), vinyl chloride, benzene, 1,2-dichloroethane, 1,1-dichloroethene (DCE), *cis*-1,2 dichloroethene, 1,2-dichloropropane and methylene chloride. The groundwater in the area is closely monitored and no one is known to be drinking contaminated water.

Several of these contaminants are known to be present in the soil as well. TCE, benzene, 1,2-

dichloroethane, 1,2-dichloropropane and methylene chloride have been found below regulatory levels in area soils. In addition, lead has been found in the surface soils at a limited number of areas within the WQARF site, and oil compounds (hydrocarbons) and chlorinated solvents have been found deeper in the soil on one of those properties.

## What are the sources of contamination?

The El Camino del Cerro Landfill, which operated in the 1970s, is known to be one source of groundwater contamination in the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site. ADEQ is investigating other potential sources of contamination, including industries northeast of I-10. Former oil recycling operations have been identified as potential sources of groundwater contamination and are also known sources of lead contamination in the surface soils at a limited number of properties within the WQARF site.

## Are there health risks?

Since no one is known to be drinking contaminated groundwater, no one is known to be at risk. However, if you get your water from a private well that has not been tested for contamination, there could be a potential risk. Please contact ADEQ Project Manager Pamela Innis at (520) 628-6717 if you have a private well in the WQARF site boundaries that has not been tested.

There is a potential health risk from soil contamination, particularly lead, at a limited number of areas within the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site. These areas have been identified, and the residents have had blood tests to determine if they have been exposed to lead. The results indicate that their blood lead levels are below the action level of 10 micrograms of lead per deciliter ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$ ). ADEQ will conduct an ERA in October 2001 to remove the contaminated soil in the area and install a bioventing system, which will remove any remaining organic contaminants.

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## Who is responsible for cleaning up the contamination?

ADEQ is working with Pima County to clean up the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site. The Pima County Solid Waste Department is investigating and cleaning up the portion of the site southwest of I-10, at the former El Camino del Cerro Landfill. ADEQ is conducting an investigation of the contamination northeast of I-10. ADEQ is overseeing the work that Pima County is performing at the WQARF site and is responsible for the final cleanup of the WQARF site.

## How is the contamination being cleaned up?

ADEQ initiated a remedial investigation for the portion of the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site northeast of I-10 in November 2000. The investigation includes installing groundwater monitor wells, sampling and testing existing wells, performing passive soil gas surveys to identify possible sources of contamination, and sampling soil at and below the surface.

A limited number of properties within the site contain soil contaminated with lead, hydrocarbons and chlorinated solvents. The contamination at these properties resulted from oil recycling operations that were once on the properties. ADEQ will conduct an ERA at one of these properties, the E.C. Winter property, beginning in October 2001, which is located on Curtis Road, east of I-10, north of Ruthrauff Road. The ERA will consist of removing contaminated soil and installing a bioventing system which would allow microbiological organisms to break down any remaining organic contaminants in the soil. ADEQ is evaluating other potentially contaminated properties.

The Pima County Solid Waste Department has been investigating the portion of the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site southwest of I-10, mainly the El Camino del Cerro Landfill. In 1996, they installed a landfill gas extraction system, which removed landfill gas to a flare where it was burned off. The flare was replaced in 1999 with a biofilter system to more effectively treat landfill gasses.

## How can I get involved?

**Join the ADEQ Community Advisory Board (CAB).** The CAB consists of residents, local business owners, water providers and other interested parties who meet periodically with ADEQ to review technical information and provide input on site activities. The CAB for

the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site was combined with the CAB for the nearby Shannon Road-Rillito Creek WQARF Site, forming the Shannon Road/El Camino del Cerro CAB. The meetings are held at the Nanini Library at 7300 N. Shannon Rd. in Tucson.

All CAB meetings are open to the public. Contact an ADEQ representative if you would like more information about the CAB or to request an application.

## ***Request to be added to ADEQ's site mailing list.***

People on the mailing list receive updates about the status of the site investigation, and notices about CAB and public meetings that will be held.

***Attend public meetings and site tours.*** Public meetings are held at various times throughout the course of the project to share information with the community on the investigation and cleanup activities. Meeting times and locations are publicly announced. Site tours take place periodically at the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site. The public is invited to attend these site tours and notice of the tours will be sent to those on the ADEQ mailing list.

***Visit the ADEQ information repository.*** Background about the El Camino del Cerro WQARF Site and updates on the site investigation and cleanup activities can be found at the ADEQ information repository at the Nanini Library information desk at 7300 N. Shannon Rd. in Tucson. You can also find an agenda for CAB meetings on the library's bulletin board.

***Visit the ADEQ Web site.*** ADEQ's Web site is located at [www.adeq.state.az.us](http://www.adeq.state.az.us). To find information about the WQARF Program, click on *Environmental Programs*, scroll down to *Waste Programs Division*, scroll down to *Superfund (WQARF/NPL) Programs*, then follow the prompts for the information that you need. Site information, notices of CAB meetings and public meetings, and minutes from previous CAB meetings are available on the Web site.

## **Where can I get more information?**

Please contact ADEQ Project Manager Pamela Innis at (520) 628-6717 for technical information. For information on community involvement activities for the WQARF site, contact ADEQ Community Involvement Coordinator Melissa Hayes at (520) 770-3309.

***ADEQ's Southern Regional Office produced this factsheet. If you have questions or comments about our activities in Southern Arizona, you may contact this office at 400 W. Congress, Suite 433, Tucson, AZ 85701, (520) 628-6733 or (888) 271-9302.***